

4.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Pyramid Highway/US 395 Connector Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process involved an extensive public and agency involvement program, with the goal to provide numerous opportunities for interested parties to participate in and contribute to the EIS process. The intent was to solicit information, ideas, and opinions from the public and public agencies. This was accomplished by providing these stakeholders opportunities for participation, contribution, and education within the EIS process. Comments and input received as part of this outreach helped identify project issues, develop and evaluate alternatives, and conduct the impact analysis used in the Draft EIS.

This chapter presents the agency and public involvement activities undertaken for this project. Appendix A *Agency Coordination* contains copies of agency correspondence.

4.2 AGENCY COORDINATION

4.2.1 Lead Agencies

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the federal lead agency for this project and is responsible for conducting the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Washoe Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) are joint local Lead Agencies and assist in preparation of the environmental analysis and documentation in accordance with Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

FHWA, NDOT, and RTC conducted agency coordination throughout the process to ensure a timely flow of project information among the federal, state, and local agencies involved in the Draft EIS and to ensure necessary interaction with and awareness of public issues and concerns identified during public involvement activities. The Study team conducted the agency coordination as outlined in the Coordination Plan prepared for the project, which is describe in Section 4.2.3 *Coordination Plan*. This section discusses the agency coordination activities conducted for this project.

4.2.2 Letters of Intent

In March 2008, NDOT sent letters of intent to project stakeholders to announce preparation of an EIS for this project. The letter, included in Appendix A *Agency Coordination*, provided a brief project description, solicited comments concerning the project, and announced the April 15, 2008, public scoping meeting described in Section

4.3.4 *Public Meetings/Open Houses/Workshops*. The letters were sent to 55 representatives of the following stakeholder organizations:

- City of Reno
- City of Reno Fire Department
- City of Reno Police Department
- City of Sparks
- City of Sparks Fire Department
- City of Sparks Police Department
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Nevada State Assembly
- Nevada State Senate
- Reno Tahoe Airport Authority
- Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC)
- Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe
- Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada
- Truckee Carson Irrigation District
- Truckee Meadows Flood Control Project
- Truckee Meadows Water Authority
- U.S. Senate, Reno
- U.S. House of Representatives, Reno
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Washoe County

4.2.3 Coordination Plan

The Coordination Plan defined the roles of the joint Lead Agencies, cooperating agencies, and participating agencies, described expectations for those agencies, outlined the project's milestone review process, and described the project's issues resolution process. The Coordination Plan was provided to agencies and stakeholders invited to serve as cooperating and participating agencies, as identified in Section 4.2.4 *Cooperating and Participating Agencies*.

Table 4-1 shows the project milestone reviews by agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public, as provided in the Coordination Plan.

Table 4-1. Project Milestone Reviews in the Coordination Plan

Milestone	Milestone Review Opportunity
Request to participate	Mid-March 2008
Public Scoping Meeting	April 15, 2008
Agency Scoping Meeting	April 16, 2008
Purpose and Need, Methodology for Alternatives Screening, Range of Alternatives	Scoping meeting, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings, Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) meetings
Environmental and socioeconomic resources	Scoping meetings, TAC meetings
Proposed Draft EIS Alternatives	TAC meetings, SWG meetings, public meetings
Proposed Preferred Alternative	TAC meetings, SWG meetings, public meetings
Draft EIS	Anticipated 2012
Final EIS	Anticipated 2013



4.2.4 Cooperating and Participating Agencies

A **cooperating agency**, according to NEPA implementing regulations, is any federal agency, other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative. A state or local agency of similar qualifications, or a Native American Tribe, when the effects are on lands of tribal interest, may also become a cooperating agency. Cooperating agencies have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process than participating agencies.

Participating agencies are those agencies with an interest in the project. Federal agencies invited to serve as participating agencies will be designated as such unless the invited agency responds in writing explaining why they are unable to serve in that role. Conversely, if a tribal government, state agency, or local agency declines, or fails to respond to, the invitation, they are not considered a participating agency.

The federal agencies, state agencies, local agencies, and Native American Tribe invited to serve as a cooperating and/or participating agency, and their role in this study, are summarized below:

- FHWA invited the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and RSIC to serve as participating agencies because the RSIC owns land adjacent to Pyramid Highway, and both accepted. When potential impacts to the RSIC property were identified later in the EIS process, FHWA invited the RSIC and BIA to serve as cooperating agencies, and both agencies agreed to serve in those roles.
- FHWA invited the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to serve as a cooperating and participating agency because the BLM owns and manages a considerable amount of land within the Study area, and BLM accepted. BLM has participated in the NEPA and scoping process, and its staff members have served on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that is discussed in Section 4.2.6 *Section 106 Consulting Parties*.
- FHWA invited the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), City of Reno, City of Sparks, and Washoe County to serve as participating agencies, and they accepted.

Cooperating Agencies for this study:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Reno-Sparks Indian Colony

Participating Agencies for this study:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - City of Reno
 - City of Sparks
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency
 - Natural Resource Conservation Service
 - Reno-Sparks Indian Colony
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 - Washoe County
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- FHWA invited FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to serve as participating agencies. Although no response was received from these agencies, because they are federal agencies, they are serving as participating agencies for this project.
- The Fish and Wildlife Service-Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office was invited to serve as a participating agency, and they declined. However, the Fish and Wildlife Service provided wildlife data and consultation throughout the EIS process.
- The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Nevada Department of Wildlife were invited to serve as participating agencies. No response was received from these state agencies; therefore, they are not serving in those roles for this study. However, the SHPO has participated in Section 106 consultation throughout the EIS process, and the Nevada Department of Wildlife was consulted regarding wildlife resources.

4.2.5 Agency Scoping Meeting

The scoping phase for this project began with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the February 2008 *Federal Register*. Agencies and stakeholders invited to serve as participating agencies for the project also were invited to attend the April 16, 2008, agency scoping meeting held at NDOT offices in Sparks, Nevada. Representatives from NDOT, RTC, FHWA, BLM, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC), and USFWS attended the meeting.

Information presented and discussed at the agency scoping meeting included project goals and objectives, Study team organization and roles, roles of participating and cooperating agencies, project development process, project Purpose and Need, alternative screening methods, range of alternatives, and environmental resources information.

The environmental resources of concern identified at the meeting were as follows:

- The USFWS expressed concerns about direct and indirect effects to the Carson Wandering Skipper, including those related to induced growth, within the following areas:
 - ♦ Vista Boulevard around the Kiley Ranch development, just east of the Study Area.
 - ♦ Winnemucca Ranch Road on BLM land west of Pyramid Highway.
 - ♦ Other private lands within the Study Area.

Scoping

NEPA regulations define scoping as, "an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. This process shall be termed scoping." The scoping process is used to identify the range of alternatives and impacts and the significant issues to be addressed in the EIS.



- BLM:
 - ♦ All BLM lands are designated for recreation or open space. These lands may have some limitations if they are proposed for transportation.
 - ♦ There was public concern about reserving the BLM land as open space.

In response to the NOI, the EPA provided scoping comments in a letter dated March 31, 2008. Their comments included general guidance on development of a Purpose and Need statement, and noted that a full range of alternatives should be examined. They also noted that undeveloped areas in the project vicinity could contain ephemeral streams, washes, or other hydrologic features that may provide water quality, flood control, and ecological values. They stated that changes in hydrology, sediment transport, impervious surfaces, decreases in water quality, disruption of hydrological and ecological connectivity, and decreases in biodiversity and ecosystem stability should be addressed in the Draft EIS. They also noted requirements under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and outlined recommendations for assessing impacts associated with indirect growth, cumulative impacts, air quality, environmental justice, historic and cultural resources, and biological resources.

4.2.6 Section 106 Consulting Parties

As part of the scoping process for this project, the Lead Agencies invited several agency and stakeholder representatives to participate as Section 106 consulting parties to identify any concerns regarding the potential effects of the proposed project on cultural resources. The SHPO and RSIC accepted the invitation to serve as Section 106 consulting parties.

The Lead Agencies provided the Section 106 consulting parties the opportunity to comment on historic findings, impacts, and mitigation measures throughout the EIS process. More information on Section 106 consultation is located in Section 3.17 *Historic Preservation*.

4.2.7 Technical Advisory Committee

The Study team established a TAC to guide the EIS process, disseminate information to their respective agencies, provide input on major study elements (Purpose and Need, alternatives development and screening), and provide input on technical issues. The TAC was one of the primary mechanisms used to obtain input at project milestones, per the Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU requirement stated in Section 4.2.3 *Coordination Plan*. TAC members included representatives from cooperating and participating agencies (BLM, City of Reno, City of Sparks, RSIC, Washoe County, and EPA) and their various departments, such as public works, planning, transportation, and traffic. Note that because the BIA was invited to serve as a cooperating agency later in the EIS process, they did not attend TAC meetings listed below. Although the RSIC became an official

cooperating agency later in the EIS process, the RSIC participated throughout the EIS process as owners of tribal land within the Study Area.

The TAC meetings held to-date, discussion topics, and project milestones reviewed are summarized in Table 4-2 and documented in Appendix A *Agency Coordination*.

Table 4-2. TAC Meetings Summary

Meeting Date	Purpose
February 21, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed the project's goals (Purpose and Need) Overview of the project process and TAC responsibilities Reviewed and discussed problem statement and screening criteria. Discussed needs in the corridor to support Purpose and Need development Project milestone review: Purpose and Need, alternatives screening
April 17, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed existing traffic collection data Update on the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan by RTC Discussion regarding the results of the April 2008 public scoping meeting Project Milestone Review: Environmental and Socioeconomic Resources, Public and Agency scoping.
July 17, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further reviewed and discussed Purpose and Need elements Determined the range of project alternatives Discussed concept screening methodology and process Project Milestone Review: Purpose and Need, Methodology for Alternatives Screening, Range of Alternatives, Environmental Resources
September 18, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed, discussed, and completed Level 1 concept screening Discussion of Section 4(f) issues Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening, Environmental Resources
January 15, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of Level 2A screening and criteria Preliminary traffic findings Discussion of environmental justice, historic, and Section 4(f) issues. Identification of April 2009 public meeting Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening, Environmental and Socioeconomic Resources
February 19, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic and environmental analysis results Level 2A screening review and completion Update on environmental justice information. Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening, Socioeconomic Resources
May 21, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineering, traffic, and environmental analysis results Level 2B screening review and completion Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening, Environmental Resources
July 16, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right-of-entry footprint review and determination Update on environmental analysis. Project Milestone Review: Environmental Resources



Table 4-2. TAC Meetings Summary

Meeting Date	Purpose
October 15, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed review and preliminary screening of initial concept alternatives Confirmed alternatives for detailed Level 3 screening analysis Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening
January 21, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic forecasting results for Level 3 screening Interim Level 3 screening review Environmental resources update Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening, Environmental Resources
August 19, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project status, project phasing, project organizational structure, project progress, off alignment options and impacts, US 395 interchange alternatives review and screening, new alternative concept to connect Pyramid and Sun Valley Boulevard using connections to El Rancho and Rock Boulevard to distribute traffic, and environmental update Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening, Environmental Resources
February 17, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project status, Sun Valley Workshop overview, Level 3 screening recap, Level 3 traffic analysis, Sun Valley crossings and interchange alternatives, environmental update, consensus items Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening, Environmental and Socioeconomic Resources.
March 17, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplemental alternatives screening, alternatives screening recap, outreach update, consensus items Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening

4.2.8 Individual Agency Meetings

The Study team met with individual agencies throughout the EIS process to discuss various topics of concern to their particular agency, including several meetings with the EPA, RSIC, BIA, BLM, Washoe County, City of Sparks, and the SHPO.

4.2.9 Coordination with Other Local, State, and Federal Agencies

Local, state, and federal agencies were contacted at various points in the process to collect technical information and discuss concerns regarding such issues as wetlands, wildlife, community resources, and city and county long-range plans. Section 4.3.3 *Stakeholder Working Group* has additional information about local agency coordination.

4.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

This section presents the public involvement activities undertaken during the EIS process for this project.

4.3.1 Notice of Intent

The Notice of Intent (NOI) is a formal, legal notice that an EIS will be prepared. FHWA published the NOI for this project in the *Federal Register* on February 29, 2008, which is included in Appendix B *Public Involvement*.

4.3.2 Project Web Site

The Study team established a project Web site (www.pyramidus395connection.com) to provide project information to the public, including project schedule, background, and alternatives analysis and results. The Web site also solicited input, announced public meetings, and provided public meeting summaries. In addition, a link to the project website can be found on the NDOT Web site.

Project Web Site

The project Web site will announce availability of the Draft EIS and Final EIS, make the documents available for public review, and provide opportunities for public comments.

4.3.3 Stakeholder Working Group

The Study team formed a Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) comprised of various community group and local agency representatives to provide input to the Study, assist the Study team to better understand the community's needs and interests, and serve as a community liaison to the Study team. The SWG also served as an additional mechanism to obtain input at project milestones, as required under Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU. The SWG met several times during the Study's alternatives development phase. Local community groups and agencies invited to participate in the SWG are listed below:

- Desert Research Institute
- North Valley Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB)
- RSIC
- NV Energy
- Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board (CAB)
- Sun Valley CAB
- Sun Valley General Improvement District
- Truckee Meadows Community College
- Washoe County Sherriff's Office
- Washoe County Department of Regional Parks and Open Space



SWG meetings are summarized in Table 4-3 and documented in Appendix A *Agency Coordination*.

Table 4-3. SWG Meetings Summary

Meeting Date and Location	Summary
April 7, 2008, Summit Christian Church, 7075 Pyramid Highway, Sparks, Nevada, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	Provided project background; project overview and goals; Study team organization; overview of proposed Purpose and Need elements; NEPA process overview; and outline of SWG roles, protocols, and working agreements. Opportunity for comments and Q&A provided. Thirteen people attended. Project Milestone Review: Purpose and Need
July 28, 2008, Desert Research Institute, 2215 Raggio Parkway, Reno, NV, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	Provided overview of the Level 1 Alternatives Development and Screening Process and obtained feedback regarding findings and recommendations prior to moving forward to next phase of analysis. Eleven people attended. Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening
April 27, 2009, Spanish Springs Library, 7100A Pyramid Highway, Sparks, NV, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	Provided overview of the Level 2A alternatives screening process and obtained feedback regarding findings and recommendations prior to moving forward with additional analysis. Five people attended. Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening
November 9, 2009, Spanish Springs Library, 7100A Pyramid Highway, Sparks, NV, 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	Reviewed and discussed design concepts and project status. Nine people attended. Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening
March 28, 2011, Spanish Springs Library, 7100A Pyramid Highway, Sparks, NV, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	Reviewed and discussed Level 3 screening results and project status. Six people attended. Project Milestone Review: Alternatives Screening

4.3.4 Public Meetings/Open Houses/Workshops

The purpose of public meetings, open houses and/or workshops is to allow participants to interact with planners, engineers, RTC, NDOT, FHWA, and other Study team members to obtain information about the project. The events allow individuals interested in the project to express their concerns and have questions answered. Public meetings held for this Study are summarized below. Additional information on public meeting summaries is contained in Appendix B *Public Involvement*. The RTC project contact identified in Section 4.3.7 *Project Contact* also has meeting materials for review.

The initial public scoping meeting was held on April 15, 2008, followed by subsequent public open houses and workshops held at various stages in the Study process, as summarized below:

- **April 15, 2008 public scoping meeting.** Held at the Lazy 5 Community Center, 7100 Pyramid Highway, Sparks, Nevada, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Approximately 100 people attended. The scoping meeting provided background information, study goals, timeline, and an overview of the NEPA process. Also, the Study team solicited input on a range of possible alternatives and draft Purpose and Need elements that were presented. The meeting was held in an open house format with a formal presentation followed by an open comment and questions/answer period. Meeting attendees could provide comments by completing and submitting comment sheets or by providing verbal comments to the court reporter present at the meeting. A Spanish interpreter was present at the meeting to assist Spanish-speaking attendees with project information and to obtain their comments.

The meeting was announced through e-mail notifications, one Reno Gazette-Journal newspaper notice, two Ahora! newspaper notices, and approximately 8,000 postcards mailed to property owners within or adjacent to the Study Area.

- Public input received during project scoping included:
 - ♦ Consider alternative modes – transit, specifically bus service was a common interest. Rail transit was also mentioned.
 - ♦ Consider expanding study boundaries to consider alternatives northwest of the valley.
 - ♦ Safety, specifically getting on and off the highway is a major concern.
 - ♦ Concern about rapid development and the ability to plan ahead – control the growth.
 - ♦ Congestion in general during the peak periods is a key concern.
 - ♦ Signal timing along highway is frustrating.
 - ♦ Location of the connection route – should it be further north?
 - ♦ Timing of project – need something done now.
- **March 4, 2009 public open house.** Held at the Lazy 5 Community Center, 7100 Pyramid Highway, Sparks, NV, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Approximately 75 people attended. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information on project progress, potential alternatives being considered (corresponding with Level 1 screening), and initial findings and recommendations; and to obtain public comment and answer questions prior to moving forward to next phase of analysis. The meeting was announced through e-mail notifications; five Reno Gazette-Journal newspaper and website notices; two Ahora! newspaper notices; Sparks Tribune newspaper notice; RTC press release; KOLO television “The Road Ahead” weekly news program interview; project, RTC, and NDOT websites; public postings at churches, libraries, community centers, and retail locations; and mailed notices.



- 1 • **April 29, 2009 public open house.** Held at the Sun Valley Neighborhood Center, 115
2 West 6th Avenue, Sun Valley, Nevada, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Approximately 23
3 people attended. The meeting purpose was to provide information on project
4 progress, potential alternatives being considered (corresponding with Level 2A
5 screening), and initial findings and recommendations; and to obtain public comment
6 and answer questions prior to moving forward to next phase of analysis. The
7 location was selected to encourage increased involvement of Sun Valley residents.
8 The meeting was announced through e-mail to county and state representatives,
9 mail notice to local area churches, project website, RTC website, Highland Ranch
10 Homeowner's Association website, Highland Ranch Homeowner's Association
11 Newsletter, and public postings at area retail locations.
- 12 • **January 19, 2011 Sun Valley community workshop.** Held at the Sun Valley
13 Neighborhood Center, 115 West 6th Avenue, Sun Valley, Nevada, from 5:30 p.m. to
14 8:00 p.m. Approximately 118 people attended. The purpose of the meeting was to
15 provide information on the Study's progress and potential connector alignment and
16 interchange alternatives being considered within the Sun Valley area (corresponding
17 with Level 2A screening), and to obtain vital public feedback prior to moving
18 forward into the next phase of analysis. The meeting was announced through Sun
19 Valley GID bill inserts, direct mail to Sun Valley residents outside the GID service
20 area, Sun Valley Voice newsletter notice, postings in various local businesses and
21 public spaces, door hangers placed at Sierra Point Apartments, project website, RTC
22 website, and Sun Valley website. Additionally, the Study team conducted pre-
23 workshop business outreach between January 4 and 12, 2011, by meeting with Sun
24 Valley area businesses to discuss the project and provide an opportunity to review
25 alternatives and provide input. Section 1.3.5 *Specialized Environmental Justice Outreach*
26 has more information about this meeting.
- 27 • **October 26, 2011 Sun Valley neighborhood meeting.** Held at Hobey's Casino, 5195
28 Sun Valley Boulevard, Sun Valley, NV, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Approximately
29 112 people attended. The purpose of the meeting was to provide additional
30 information on the connector alignment and interchange alternatives being
31 considered within the Sun Valley area (corresponding with Level 3 screening), and
32 to obtain vital public feedback prior to moving forward into the next phase of
33 analysis. The meeting was announced through direct mail to potentially affected
34 property owners, businesses, and residents (approximately 500), press release, e-mail
35 blast, and project website, as well as distribution of English and Spanish language
36 flyers.
- 37 • **January 31, 2012, Sun Valley neighborhood meeting.** Held at Truckee Meadows
38 Community College, 7000 Dandini Boulevard, Reno, NV, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
39 Approximately 96 people attended. The purpose of the meeting was to respond to
40 questions raised during the previous neighborhood meeting; provide additional,
41 detailed information regarding the right-of-way acquisition process and the legal
42 protections afforded to property owners; and provide an opportunity for additional

questions and comments on the alternatives under consideration. Attendees provided written comments and questions via cards provided during the meeting, or provide verbal comments to the court reporter who was available at the meeting. The meeting was announced through direct mail to potentially affected property owners, businesses, and residents (approximately 500), press release, e-mail blast, and project website.

- June 13, 2012, Spanish Springs open house.** Held at Yvonne Shaw Middle School, 600 Eagle Canyon Drive, Sparks from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Approximately 63 people attended. The purpose of the meeting was to provide additional information to Spanish Springs residents and business owners about the potential freeway alignments and interchange alternatives being considered within the Spanish Springs area. NDOT Right-of-Way Division personnel were present to provide information on the property acquisition process. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the Study Team to obtain additional public feedback on the various alternatives. Attendees provided written comments and questions via cards provided during the meeting, verbal comments and questions during the question/answer session, or verbal comments to the court reporter present at the meeting. A Spanish language interpreter was also available. Handout materials were provided in English and Spanish. The meeting was announced through bilingual (English/Spanish) public notices distributed by direct mail, local agencies and elected officials, email blast, project and RTC websites, and public notices posted at locations within the project corridor, including Scolari's, Oasis Mobile Estates, Blue Gem Estates, Spanish Springs Library, Save Mart, and 7-Eleven.

4.3.5 Small Group Meetings

In addition to public meetings, several meetings were held to obtain input and provide more focused project information to smaller groups and organizations, as summarized in Table 4-4.

Table 4-4. Small Group Meetings Summary

Date, Meeting, Location	Meeting Purpose
March 26, 2009, Wedekind Road Neighborhood Outreach, RTC Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with residents from the Wedekind Road area at their request to discuss concerns and answer questions regarding alternatives under consideration that would potentially impact their neighborhood.
October 14, 2009, Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) and Desert Research Institute (DRI) Meeting, Desert Research Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and discussed design concepts with TMCC/DRI facilities representatives
October 19, 2009, Tanamera Development/Iratcaval Properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and discussed design concepts with Tanamera Development representatives and legal representative for Iratcaval property.
November 12, 2009, Wingfield Nevada Group, Wingfield Nevada Group Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and discussed design concepts with Lazy 8 Casino Resort developers.



Table 4-4. Small Group Meetings Summary

Date, Meeting, Location	Meeting Purpose
January 12, 2010, Desert Research Institute meeting, RTC Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DRI Master Plan coordination meeting.
February 8, 2010, Desert Research Institute meeting, Desert Research Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design concept review and Study team familiarization with DRI development plan.
February 12, 2010, TMCC and Washoe County Sheriff, NDOT offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project process and alternatives overview.
August 31, 2010, Special meeting with Sun Valley Residents and Washoe County Commissioner Weber, RTC Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting held at the request of Commissioner Weber and Sun Valley residents to discuss Sun Valley crossings and project status.
October 19, 2010, Special meeting with Sun Valley Residents and Washoe County Commissioners Weber & Jung, RTC Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Commissioners Weber and Jung and Sun Valley Residents to discuss Sun Valley crossings and project status.
April 11, 2011, City of Sparks Council Presentation, Sparks City Hall Council Chambers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A brief presentation about the two Pyramid projects in the City of Sparks. Lee Gibson of RTC provided an update on this Study, including project history, alternatives moving forward, public involvement conducted, and next steps.
April 14, 2011, Golden Valley Homeowner's Association, Raleys Community Room in the Golden Valley Raleys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A presentation at their regular meeting to provide an overview of the project scope and schedule, including the benefits and impacts.

Table 4-5 summarizes the Study team meetings with representatives of the Sun Valley General Improvement District (GID):

Table 4-5. GID Meetings Summary

Date, Meeting	Meeting Purpose
February 11, 2010, Sun Valley GID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented project status update and design concept review for Sun Valley GID and members of the public.
January 27, 2011, Sun Valley GID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented project status update, review of connector alternative crossings through Sun Valley, overview of Sun Valley workshop and feedback received.
July 14, 2011, Sun Valley GID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief presentation with project status update, review of connector alternative crossings through Sun Valley, and schedule for completing the Draft EIS and Final EIS.
February 11, 2013, Sun Valley GID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field trip of Alternative 3 (Ridge Alignment) with SVGID representatives to see the alignment's visibility from the Sun Valley Community.
March 18, 2013, Sun Valley GID and Washoe County Commissioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field trip of Alternative 3 (Ridge Alignment) with SVGID representatives and Washoe County Commissioner Jung to see the alignment's visibility from the Sun Valley Community.

Table 4-6 summarizes the Study team's outreach to CABs:

Table 4-6. CAB Outreach Summary

Date, Meeting	Meeting Purpose
April 11, 2009, Sun Valley CAB meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided Sun Valley CAB members and general public in attendance with overview of project background, purpose, timeline, process, findings and recommendations, and next steps. Encouraged continued Sun Valley resident involvement and provided opportunity for comment submission and questions and answers.
November 14, 2009, Sun Valley CAB meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project status presentation and design concept review for Sun Valley CAB representatives and the public.
November 16, 2009, North Valleys CAB/NAB meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project status presentation and design concept review with North Valleys CAB and NAB and members of the public.
January 13, 2010, Spanish Springs CAB meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project status update and design concept review for Spanish Springs CAB and members of the public.
April 10, 2010, Sun Valley CAB meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General project update.
January 8, 2011, Sun Valley CAB meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project update and information regarding 1/19/2011 Sun Valley workshop.
January 12, 2011, Spanish Springs CAB meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project status update and information regarding 1/19/2011 Sun Valley workshop.
July 9, 2011, Sun Valley CAB update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written project update provided to the CAB.
November 5, 2011 Sun Valley CAB meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project status update.

In addition to the meetings listed above, the Study team provided a project status update at the November 18, 2009, and March 2, 2011, monthly meetings of the RTC's Citizen Advisory Committee.

4.3.6 Specialized Environmental Justice Outreach

The Study team began outreach to Environmental Justice (EJ) populations during the initial scoping phase of the Study to ensure that the concerns of minority and low-income communities were considered, and that these groups had a voice in the EIS process. This allowed the Study team to begin working early on to avoid disproportionate adverse impacts to EJ populations.

Census data, other data sources, and field visits were used to identify minority and low-income populations in the

The Study team conducted specialized outreach with the EJ communities to identify issues, concerns, and potential measures to mitigate for adverse impacts. This outreach also helped to make sure affected EJ populations had access to project information and input into the decision-making process.



Study Area. Local information sources included local neighborhood organizations, housing authorities, non-profit organizations, and community centers. Early in the process, the Study team contacted representatives from the following organizations:

- Catholic Community Services of Northern Nevada
- Washoe County Housing Authority (Reno)
- Sparks Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Sparks Citizens Advisory Committee
- Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce

The information obtained from these resources helped verify Census populations. These local contacts, based on their own familiarity with the area, provided additional information to more accurately identify EJ communities within the Study Area. Study team members also spoke with several managers of mobile home parks and discussed the project, their knowledge of the Study and involvement to date, and ways to participate.

The Study team monitored attendance at the initial public scoping meeting to check participation from EJ areas, which indicated that attendance from the Sun Valley community was sparse.

Because Sun Valley contains likely EJ populations and will likely experience project impacts, the Study team held specialized outreach meetings to more involve this community, as summarized below:

- **January 19, 2011, community workshop.** Held at the Sun Valley Neighborhood Center, 115 West 6th Avenue, Sun Valley, Nevada, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Approximately 118 people attended the workshop. Sandwiches and beverages were provided to attendees. The purpose of the workshop was to provide information on the study's progress and potential connector alignment and interchange alternatives being considered within the Sun Valley area, and to obtain vital public feedback prior to moving forward into the next phase of analysis. The meeting was announced with bilingual (English/Spanish) public notices distributed as follows:
 - ♦ **Direct Mail.** Notification via Sun Valley GID billing inserts to all Sun Valley GID customers, supplemental direct mail notification distribution to Sun Valley residents outside of the Sun Valley GID service area, and door hanger meeting notification distributed to residents of Sierra Point Apartments in Sun Valley.
 - ♦ **Website Postings.** (www.pyramidus395connection.com, www.rtcwashoe.com, www.sunvalleynevada.us).

- ♦ **Public Posting Locations.** Meeting notices were provided for posting and/or distribution at the Sun Valley GID, Sun Valley Neighborhood Center, Scolari's Food & Drug, Rainbow Market, Dollar Loan Center, The House of Realty, Hobey's Restaurant & Casino, Valley Jewelry & Loan, Local Publications, and The Sun Valley Voice (English language posting only).
- ♦ **Pre-Workshop Outreach.** Study team representatives engaged in additional pre-workshop outreach activities to raise project awareness and encourage workshop participation, including visits with local businesses and outreach to local community organizations. Organizations, community groups, and businesses that were contacted and/or visited prior to the workshop include:
 - Sun Valley CAB
 - Spanish Springs CAB
 - Sun Valley Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association
 - Lois Allen Elementary School Parent-Faculty Organization
 - Rainbow Market
 - Scolari's Food & Drug
 - Hobey's Casino & Restaurant
 - Valley Jewelry & Loan
 - The House of Realty
 - Sierra Point Apartments
 - Dollar Loan Center
 - La Gloria Market
 - CVS Pharmacy
 - Creaciones Vecis Dress Shop
 - La Panaderia y Jalisco Bakery
 - Unsuccessful attempts were made to contact Wells Fargo Bank, Super Buy Market, Quality Motors, Easy Living Realty, Norma Fink Inc. Realtors, and Sun Valley Smoke Shop regarding the project and the opportunity to meet with project representatives prior to the workshop.

4.3.7 Project Contact

RTC staff and Study team members were available to answer questions from the public. They were responsive and available to the public via phone, fax, e-mail, and in person. The main project contact was:



Doug Maloy, PE, Project Manager
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County
1105 Terminal Way, Suite 108
Reno, NV 89502
(775) 335-1865
Fax (775) 348-0170
dmaloy@rtcwashoe.com

4.3.8 Public Input Summary

During the course of the Study, and prior to the Draft EIS public comment period, many comments were received via letter, phone conversation, meetings, e-mail, or facsimile. Major themes emerging from these comments are summarized in Table 4-7.

Table 4-7. Public Input Summary

Subject	Comment
Acquisitions/Property Values Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project will adversely affect property values and result in residential relocations. Impacts to Sun Valley community. Impacts to Wedekind Road area neighborhood. Accommodations for mortgages with a higher balance than the free-market value of the home).
Community Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Sun Valley improvements as mitigation– sidewalks, lighting, curb and gutter, community development. Separation of Sun Valley community resulting from a grade-separated interchange or overcrossing at Sun Valley Boulevard Impacts to Sun Valley businesses. Impacts to Desert Research Institute. Induced growth and inadequate infrastructure. Proposed alternatives benefit the Spanish Springs community while adversely impacting the Sun Valley community. Opportunity for redevelopment. Ability to create a community gateway.
Environmental Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts to the few existing wetlands. Noise impacts and questions about use of sound walls. Project effects to air quality, project effects to wildlife, flood potential.
Traffic/Access/Safety Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access and circulation to community facilities, commercial areas, and neighborhoods. Current unsafe access to Lazy 5 library at Pyramid Highway. Traffic safety on Highland Ranch Road. Increased traffic on Sun Valley Boulevard post project. Effect on traffic on nearby roads and neighborhoods post project. US 395 congestion worsening after east/west connection is added. Project worsening the already problematic Parr interchange. Insufficient access options for proposed connector. Accuracy of traffic modeling/forecasting.

Table 4-7. Public Input Summary

Subject	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottleneck at McCarran and then I-80 even after Pyramid Highway is widened. • Which streets will project affect?
Construction Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of time to complete project—improvements are needed now. • Needed project 10 years ago. • The need to do study all over again if too much time elapses between completion of EIS and construction start. • Impacts such as dust and traffic during construction.
Trail Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts to existing trails. • Existing unsafe bicycle conditions along Pyramid Highway and Sun Valley Boulevard. • Need a safe separated path along Pyramid Highway to encourage alternate transportation.
Transit Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve/increase transit options within the corridor. Consider bus, light rail, monorail, or tram. • Plan ahead and make roads wide enough to handle rapid transit system 20 or more years from now.
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers need to offset costs with impact fees—be part of the solution. • How is project being funded? • Make the connector a toll road so it is paid for by those who use it.
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous comments opposed to Alternatives H-6 and H-7 due to high negative landowner and community impacts. • Numerous comments supporting Alternative H-17 because it would provide the most traffic relief with the least negative impacts. • Support voiced for both the north and south crossing of Sun Valley Boulevard. • Support voiced for both the Pyramid Highway Off alignment and On alignment Alternatives. • Minimize residential relocations/acquisitions. • Other alternatives were suggested, including a ring road around Reno, a road from Eagle Canyon Road to US 395, an underpass at Sun Valley Boulevard, and moving the entire alignment 0.5 mile west of existing Pyramid Highway, and building a West Sun Valley arterial. • Expand Study Area north to include planned development in that area. • Existing travel delays and future traffic impacts on Sun Valley Boulevard after project is constructed. • Sparks population's traffic should be routed through Sparks • Use McCarran to address traffic demand. • Spanish Springs having only one way in/one way out via Pyramid Highway—build alternate routes and/or service roads first, before improving Pyramid Highway. • Like east/west to reduce Highland Ranch Road/Sun Valley Boulevard cut through traffic. • Address any planned improvements to US 395 at same time as, or prior to, construction of the connector. • All alternatives cross through Sun Valley - Why not a north crossing of Sun Valley (near Highland Ranch Parkway)? Just build the West Sun Valley arterial and that will solve the problem.



Comments received from agencies and the public helped guide decision making on major project elements, such as development of the Purpose and Need and alternatives. Chapter 2.0 *Alternatives* describes how the Study team incorporated public and agency input into the development, refinement, and screening of alternatives. Input also helped shape the public outreach activities conducted by the Study team.

4.4 COORDINATION SUBSEQUENT TO THE RELEASE OF THIS DRAFT EIS

A Notice of Availability (NOA) of this Draft EIS for public review and comment, and the date for the public hearing, will be announced in the Reno Gazette-Journal newspaper at least 15 days in advance of the public hearing. The NOA also will be published in the *Federal Register* and mailed to individuals on the project mailing list.

The public hearing will provide the general public with the opportunity to provide official comment on the project and the Draft EIS. Written comments, to be included as an official part of the record, will be accepted for 60 days following the NOA. Written comments received, and responses to comments, will be provided in the Final EIS.

